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AN ANCIENT HINDU SCULPTURE

On the east side of the South Vestibule near the entrance to the Museum is exhibited a remarkable Hindu sculpture, which was found at low water mark imbedded in the mud on Saugor, an island of Bengal in the delta of



ANTIQUE MARBLE SCULPTURE
The God Surya and Attendants
From Saugor Island, India

the Ganges, at the mouth of the Hugli, about fifty miles south of Calcutta, in the year 1833, by Mr. P. G. Sinclair, a pilot in the East India Company's service, and purchased from him by its late owner, Mr. John W. Rulon, who at that time was residing in Calcutta. It is carved from a solid block of marble, five feet, eleven inches in height and thirty-one inches in breadth at the base. The face of the slab bears in high relief a figure of Surya, the sun god, identical with Savitri, Ravi and Aditya, guardian of the southwest, in the Hindu pantheon. At Baroda, in Gujarat, where a temple is dedicated to him, he is known as Surya Narayana. He is represented in the sculpture as standing in his splendid chariot, drawn by the seven coursers of the sun, and holding in each hand a gracefully sculptured lotus. At his feet, and seated upon an elephant's head, is a figure of Aruna, the legless charioteer of the sun, holding in one hand the heaven-spun reins, and in the other a whip. On each side of Surya are two attendants, the nearest being female figures carrying chowries or fly brushes, the other two, of larger size, being male figures, representing the priest and soldier castes; at their

feet are two smaller figures of archers with bows. In the background and surrounding Surya are richly carved figures, in sitting postures, playing musical instruments.

This sculpture, once white, but now stained ebony black, is supposed to have originally occupied the Temple of the Sun on Saugor Island, in one of the largest cities in India, which, as related by Sir William Jones, was entirely destroyed by an inundation of the sea many centuries ago.